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Barbie joins the rich and famous

REUTERS
LOS ANGELES

Now that Barbie's almost 40, the world's most popular doll has started to hang out with the rich and famous.

Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, the 12-year-old twin actresses of Full House and Two of a Kind said Wednesday they signed a deal with Barbie's maker Mattel Inc. to launch next year dolls in their likenesses as celebrity friends of Barbie.

Mattel spokeswoman Lisa McKendall said the company is also unveiling next month a Rosie O'Donnell friend of Barbie doll at the annual Toy Fair in New York.

"We're always looking for celebrity alliances," McKendall said.

Barbie made her debut in 1959 at the New York Toy Fair. When the dolls hit the shops they were snapped up like hot cakes and Mattel has sold more than one billion.

Mattel estimates two dolls are bought every second. Over the years since 1959, Barbie has been produced in over 500 variations, has embarked on 75 professions and represented 45 nationalities.

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